

In the Claims:

1. (original): A method of creating a photocollage, including:  
providing plural photographic images;  
encoding each of the photographic images with a different steganographic message;  
the steganographic messages serving to associate with each photographic image, information corresponding thereto; and  
printing the encoded photographic images on a common page.
2. (original): The method of claim 1 in which the information comprises data identifying a person associated with the corresponding photographic image.
3. (original): The method of claim 2 in which the person is a photographer of the photographic image.
4. (original): The method of claim 1 in which each message identifies a corresponding record in a database, each record including information specific to a corresponding photographic image.
5. (original): The method of claim 1 in which the steganographic message conveys plural digital bits of information.
6. (original): The method of claim 1 in which at least one of the steganographic messages is dispersed across the corresponding photographic image, rather than being localized in a limited portion.
7. (original): The method of claim 1 in which each steganographic message is encoded in accordance with pseudo-random noise data.

8. (original): The method of claim 1 in which each of the photographic images comprises pixels, and the encoding changes the luminance of a majority of the pixels of each photographic image.

9. (original): A computer storage medium having stored thereon computer instructions for performing the method of claim 1.

10. (original): A photocollage produced by the method of claim 1.

11. (previously presented): A storage medium having represented thereon a photocollage, the photocollage comprising:

plural photographic images, each embedded with a different steganographic message that can be correctly decoded despite alteration of the image that alters a representation of the steganographic message therein; and

the steganographic messages serving to associate with each photographic image, information corresponding thereto.

12. (original): The invention of claim 11 in which the information comprises data identifying a person associated with the corresponding photographic image.

13. (original): The invention of claim 12 in which the person is a photographer of the photographic image.

14. (original): The invention of claim 11 in which each message identifies a corresponding record in a database, each record including information specific to a corresponding photographic image.

15. (original): The invention of claim 11 in which the steganographic message conveys plural digital bits of information.

16. (original): The invention of claim 11 in which at least one of the steganographic messages is dispersed across the corresponding photographic image, rather than being localized in a limited region thereon.

17. (original): The invention of claim 11 in which each steganographic message is encoded in accordance with pseudo-random noise data.

18. (previously presented): A method comprising encoding a photograph with a steganographic message, the message serving to identify a corresponding record in a database, the database record detailing information relating to the photograph, the steganographic message being correctly decodable despite alteration of the photograph that alters a representation of the steganographic message therein.

19. (original): The method of claim 18 in which the message comprises an index number.

20. (original): The method of claim 18 in which the information relating to the photograph includes information identifying a person associated with the photograph.

21. (previously presented): The method of claim 20 in which the person is a photographer of the photographic image.

22. (previously presented): The method of claim 18 in which the information relating to the photograph includes contact information for the photographer.

23. (original): The method of claim 18 in which the steganographic message conveys plural digital bits of information.

24. (original): The method of claim 18 in which the steganographic message is dispersed across the photograph, rather than being localized in a limited portion.

25. (original): The method of claim 18 in which the steganographic message is encoded in accordance with pseudo-random noise data.

26. (original): The method of claim 18 in which the photograph comprises pixels, and the encoding changes the luminance of a majority of the pixels.

27. (currently amended): A method comprising encoding a photograph with a steganographic message, the message serving to identify a corresponding record in a database, the database record detailing information relating to the photograph, wherein the steganographic message is a code pre-exposed on emulsion media, onto which media a photographic image is later exposed.

28. (original): A computer storage medium having stored thereon computer instructions for performing the method of claim 18.

29. (original): A photograph produced in accordance with the method of claim 18.

30. (previously presented): A storage medium comprising one of paper, film, or computer storage media, the storage medium having represented thereon a photograph, characterized in that the photograph is encoded with a steganographic message, the message serving to identify a corresponding record in a database, the database record detailing information relating to the photograph, the steganographic message being correctly decodable despite alteration of the photograph that alters a representation of the steganographic message therein.

31. (original): The invention of claim 30 in which the message comprises an index number.

32. (original): The invention of claim 30 in which the information relating to the photograph includes information identifying a person associated with the photograph.

33. (previously presented): The invention of claim 32 in which the person is a photographer of the photographic image.

34. (previously presented): The invention of claim 30 in which the information relating to the photograph includes contact information for the photographer.

35. (original): The invention of claim 30 in which the steganographic message conveys plural digital bits of information.

36. (original): The invention of claim 30 in which the steganographic message is dispersed across the photograph, rather than being localized in a limited portion.

37. (original): The invention of claim 30 in which the steganographic message is encoded in accordance with pseudo-random noise data.

38. (original): The invention of claim 30 in which the photograph comprises pixels, and the encoding changes the luminance of a majority of the pixels.

39. (previously presented): An emulsion medium onto which a photographic image is later exposed, characterized in that the medium is encoded by pre-exposing it with a steganographic message, the message serving to identify a corresponding record in a database, the database record detailing information relating to said medium.

40. (previously presented): A storage medium comprising one of film or computer storage media, having represented thereon a medical image embedded with a steganographic message, the message aiding in authentication of the medical image, the steganographic message being correctly decodable despite alteration of the image that alters a representation of the steganographic message therein.

41. (original): The invention of claim 40 in which the message aids in protecting the medical image against undetected tampering.

42. (original): The invention of claim 40 in which the steganographic message is dispersed across the medical image, rather than being localized in a limited portion.

43. (original): The invention of claim 40 in which the steganographic message is encoded in accordance with pseudo-random noise data.

44. (original): The invention of claim 40 in which the medical image comprises pixels, and the encoding changes the luminance of a majority of the pixels.

45. (new): The storage medium of claim 11 wherein said alteration comprises lossy compression/decompression of data representing one or more of the embedded photographs.

46. (new): The method of claim 18 wherein said alteration comprises lossy compression/decompression of data representing the encoded photograph.

47. (new): The method of claim 30 wherein the storage medium comprises computer storage media, and said alteration comprises lossy compression/decompression of data representing the encoded photograph.

48. (new): The method of claim 40 wherein the storage medium comprises computer storage media, and said alteration comprises lossy compression/decompression of data representing the encoded medical image.

49. (new): The method of claim 18 wherein the encoding is adapted to local attributes of the photograph, so that energy of said encoding varies in accordance with said attributes.